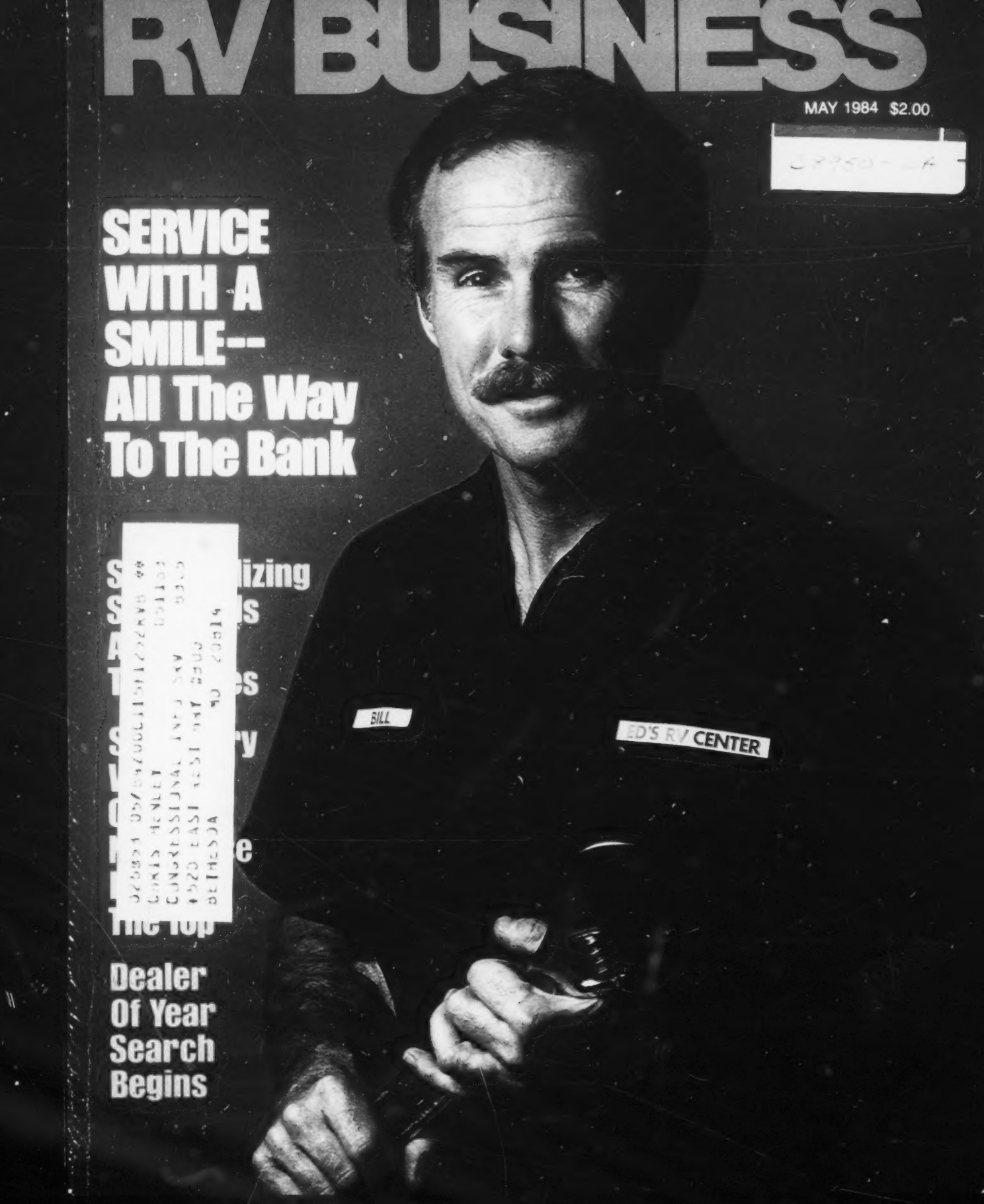
RV BUSINESS

MAY 1984 $2.00

SERVICE WITH A SMILE-- All The Way To The Bank



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The Top Dealer Of Year Search Begins

RV BUSINESS

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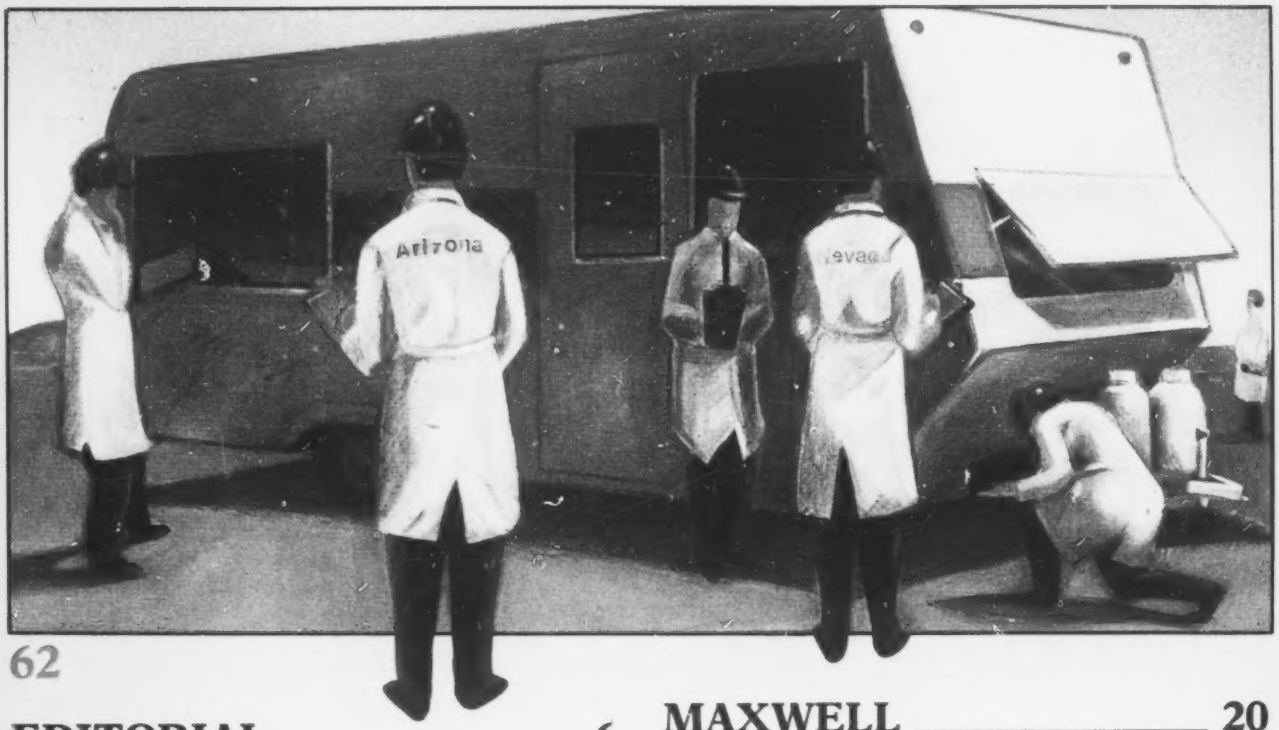
Contents



62

EDITORIAL ____ 6
by Michael Schneider

LETTERS ____ 8

WRIGHT ____ 10
Kropf moves

BAROMETER ____ 15
by John Thompson

PERSPECTIVE ____ 16
by Gaylord Maxwell
The best is yet to come

ASSOCIATIONS ____ 17
by Olga Markowitz
Southwest Super Show IX breaks records

SHIPMENTS ____ 18

MAXWELL ____ 20
'Snow wonder

WILMATH ____ 24
The age of Aquarius

OERTLE ____ 32
3-2-1-launch

RV PEOPLE ____ 42

DETROIT ____ 44
The race is on

SERVICE ____ 54
by Susan R. O'Hara

THE CALL FOR SERVICE ____ 56
by Robert J. Emprimo

STANDARDIZING STANDARDS ____ 62
by John Thompson

DELAMINATION ____ 70
by Don Wright

WILLIAM P. CLARK ____ 76

SECURITY ____ 84
by Sheryl Davis

COMPANY PROFILES ____ 92
by Bob Longsdorf, Don Wright

1985 DEALER OF THE YEAR SEARCH ____ 106

84

INDUSTRY NEWS ____ 109
Olga Markowitz, Coordinator
Former HRC pres buys Newmar

AD OF THE MONTH ____ 126
by Ben Sussman
Valley Industries

CALENDAR ____ 132

RETALES ____ 134
by Bob Stevens

ON THE COVER: *The service department can be overlooked and disregarded as a "necessary evil," or it can be a real boon to a company's bottom line. Suggestions on how your service department can make the latter happen begin on page 54. Photo by Ed Ikuta.*

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Perspective

An analysis of RVB's monthly survey of its Dealer Advisory Board Members

GAYLORD MAXWELL

	NEW						USED					
	FOR MONTH			YEAR TO DATE			FOR MONTH			YEAR TO DATE		
	FEB '84	FEB '83	% CHANGE	1984	1983	% CHANGE	FEB '84	FEB '83	% CHANGE	1984	1983	% CHANGE
MOTORHOMES	**91**	**73**	**+25%**	**166**	**142**	**+17%**	**77**	**58**	**+33%**	**134**	**99**	**+35%**
TRAVEL TRAILERS	85	64	+33%	137	115	+19%	66	74	−11%	101	112	−10%
TRUCK CAMPERS	**12**	**13**	**− 8%**	**19**	**17**	**+12%**	**23**	**17**	**+35%**	**30**	**22**	**+36%**
CAMPING TRAILERS	177	108	+64%	220	133	+65%	29	29	Same	36	38	− 5%
FIFTH-WHEELS	**32**	**23**	**+39%**	**61**	**45**	**+36%**	**9**	**9**	**Same**	**12**	**24**	**−50%**

	FOR MONTH			YEAR TO DATE		
	FEB '84	FEB '83	% CHANGE	1984	1983	% CHANGE
SALES VOLUME	**$7,031,083**	**$5,393,549**	**+30%**	**$12,399,920**	**$9,580,550**	**+29%**
TOTAL UNIT SALES	628	468	+34%	916	747	+23%
NEW UNIT SALES	**397**	**281**	**+41%**	**603**	**452**	**+33%**
USED UNIT SALES	231	187	+24%	313	295	+ 6%

The RV retail scene is very upbeat. Dealers generally showed a respectable improvement over last February, and figures for the year to date show that a banner year is in the making.

Percentages of increase aren't as great this year as last, but circumstances are very different. In 1982, sales were relatively low, making the boom in '83 appear unusually great. Comparisons between '83 and '84 may not show the enormous percentage increases we saw last year, but in terms of units and dollars, this will possibly be the best RV year ever.

New unit sales are better than those for used. For some reason, the latter is in a rather flat mode. It will undoubtedly pick up as the weather warms. First-time buyers are often used buyers. They tend to be more active as vacation time approaches.

Profits have picked up, too. After the winter months during which dealers traditionally have leaner pickings, they're working for good grosses again—and getting them.

MOTORHOMES:

Indications are that '84 will be another very strong year for motorized, both new and used. In spite of the fact that prices have risen to what seems to be astronomical heights, buyers have caused factory backlogs. Mini sales have picked up nicely and are running not far behind Class A's. The only dark cloud on the motorhome horizon is the growing number of new dealers, particularly car dealers. If ever the supply outstrips demand, the situation is ripe for tumbling grosses. It is hoped that the industry will exercise restraint in dealer placement.

TRAVEL TRAILERS:

After a very slow start in January, travel trailers have found a new, much faster track. With sales running 33% over last February, it is apparent that trailer buyers are out in force. Not many dealers are getting outstanding unit numbers, but everybody is getting a good share of the action. Used units aren't turning as well as they should, however. Perhaps the demand will grow during late spring. Profits are rated good.

TRUCK CAMPERS:

This is the only category to have a drop in new unit sales, but it is a very small decline. For the first two months of the year, sales are still up, however. Used units are doing exceptionally well. Profits are rated from good to excellent.

CAMPING TRAILERS:

Sales of this type are outstanding! It's the best start in many years and could be indicative of a real banner year. Obviously, the fact that the employment picture is much better for younger families (buyers of this RV type) means that family vacations are being planned for this summer. Most of the dealers on the Dealer Advisory Board who have strong camping trailer sales efforts, especially shows, have great starts for the year. Profits were rated higher for this category than for any other.

FIFTH-WHEELS:

New-unit sales are tremendous, running well ahead of '83, which was a great fifth-wheel year. It still takes a specialist in this type—with an excellent inventory—to get the numbers. A dealer can't expect to do much of a sales job with two or three units mixed in with other inventory. This type sells best to the retiree who is looking for comfort. They're popular with people with rural backgrounds. The used numbers don't look good for the first two months, but that will change quickly. Fiver profits are rated good to excellent. Δ

RVIA, FEBRUARY

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during February 1984 was 32,500 units, up 31.0% from February of 1983.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of Allen Yoder Jr. of Jayco, Incorporated, Middlebury, Indiana.

RV shipments were as follows in Feb. 1984		Feb. 1983	Percent Change	Cumulative 1984	Cumulative 1983	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	6,100	4,900	+24.5%	13,200	9,700	+36.1%
FIFTH-WHEELS	1,500	1,000	+50.0%	3,000	2,000	+50.0%
TRUCK CAMPERS	700	400	+75.0%	1,000	700	+42.9%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	12,400	10,700	–15.9%	23,400	22,500	– 4.0%
TYPE A: MOTOR-HOMES	3,800	2,300	+65.2%	7,200	4,200	+71.4%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	900	500	+80.0%	1,300	800	+62.5%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR-HOMES	3,700	1,900	+94.7%	6,500	3,400	+91.2%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	3,400	3,100	+ 9.7%	5,900	5,500	+ 7.3%
TOTALS	32,500	24,800	+31.0%	61,500	48,800	+26.0%